

Madam Chair..... And Committee members.

EXHIBIT 14
DATE 2/5/07
HB 452

My name is Jill Isakson and I live in Great Falls, MT. I am here on my own time and at my own expense. I am an employment consultant for the Job Service Workforce Center and have been employed there for more than 28 years.

I am a board member for a non-profit organization called Opening Doors where we meet with and assist individuals coming out of the prison system. I also am a member of Saint Dismas in which I provide encouraging visits to inmates at our local jail and offer assistance once they are released..

When assisting these individuals whether it is with my employment or through the organizations I often meet people coming out of our prison system that seem to lack work skills, life skills, even basic education to get their feet planted on the right path to become productive citizens. They show no hope for their future.

Occasionally I come across individuals who are motivated to change their lives by looking for ways to go back to school to further their education or seek employment that may move them into an apprenticeship occupations. It has been my experience that these people do better in returning to life on the outside and with HB 452 this would recognize these motivated individuals and allow them to move on with their lives a little sooner. This is not a gift or an easy ride, but a recognition of their achievement for their hard work.

This is a win - win situation. There is ^{minor} ~~no~~ cost to the State of Montana for this bill. The offender on parole gets to move on with their lives, and the state will benefit in reduced probation, parole and incarceration costs. And with a more educated citizen I believe that we ^{will} can see a savings with welfare assistance programs because these individuals will be working at higher paying jobs and supporting their families. They also will be setting positive examples to their children on how they turned their lives around. Lets do the right thing and give these people our vote of confidence.

Thank you Madam Chair.